



informed

Issue 404

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From June 2010, the WEL-Informed news-letter will be published bi-monthly—there will be 6 issues each year. The next issue will be August 2010.

For more information, see the Convenor's Report on page 5.

A WOMAN PM, IS IT A STEP FORWARD?

BY EVA COX

Newcastle Herald
24 June 2010

Today is a milestone, we have a woman as PM, and I think Julia is an excellent choice. Were she a man, she may have been elected as leader instead of Rudd but she knew then that a mix of being both female and technically a member of the left faction would stop her. So she put her numbers behind Rudd and became his deputy. She was obviously much more than the usual deputy and managed a huge portfolio. Some parts went well, and we have a much improved Industrial Relations regime, some areas created problems but overall she was seen as an excellent deputy, almost a leader.

She was always seen as a potential alternative leader but genuinely seemed committed to doing her job. That was not accepted and the rumours and polls continued to suggest her as an alternative. So it is not surprising that the power boys in the party looked to her to replace Rudd as his support slipped suddenly. After all, they had tried a similar trick in NSW and there, at least, Kristina Kenneally had made up some ground personally.

The Federal government isn't terminally flawed as is NSW, and Julia has a clear record of good leadership but this habit of putting in a woman when things go pear-shaped is not serious progress. The ALP branches haven't a good general record for selecting and supporting women in top positions. Two previous top jobs went to Joan Kirner and Carmen Lawrence when their next state elections were unwinnable, as has, I suspect, Kristina Keneally. However, they have not endorsed another female premier in Victoria or WA since then, so the change was not a serious gender gain.

Julia's situation is not dire as the ALP is in a winnable situation. The danger is that she will not get a fair go because Australia is still not comfortable with powerful women. The judgement applied is still very

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WEL NSW Inc is a member of WEL Australia and is dedicated to creating a society where women's participation and potential are unrestricted, acknowledged and respected, where women and men share equally in society's responsibilities and rewards.

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The editor(s) happily read emails sent to welnsw@comcen.com.au and hard copy articles or letters can be posted to the WEL office.

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Editor for this edition: Lorraine Slade, Advice/Mailout Team: Anne Barber, Josefa Green.

Join the national WEL email list, email your name, email address and your WEL group (eg NSW) to owner-wel-members@lists.nwjc.org.au

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gender based. The knives are already out, and talk back still reflects some very conservative views. The process of taking down an existing PM is never going to be pretty and, if it is seen to be done by a woman, could be seen as particularly dangerous. This is a first term Prime Minister, who was exceptionally popular, so his demise will bring mixed feelings. The person that replaced him will inevitably be seen as part of the process, and sudden change will be seen as political assassination. Paul Keating was seen to 'have blood on his hands', even though it was time for a change. The Opposition is already calling the event an 'assassination'. I am concerned that the way this happens could also be used against her. At least, she was elected unopposed!

There are still widespread and still entrenched views that there is something unnatural about women in power. Where a diversity of stances is OK for men, judgements of 'good' women are still tied to more limited feminine stereotypes, such as being caring and nice rather than tough and decisive. Hopefully she can turn around the surprisingly negative public views of powerful women and being the first woman Prime Minister will hopefully give her an approval boost.

A tough competent woman, doing what a tough competent man would do, is too often judged more harshly. Julia deserves to be taken seriously as a she is both a good leader, and competent policy person, regardless of being the first woman in the role. We will know we really have made progress when women in top positions become normal and not worthy of comment. It will also mean we get better leaders, not just because many are women, but because we no longer exclude good people because of their gender.

This change will also be a test of whether the Australian electorate, and those attempting to court them, can focus on the political competence of our leaders, not their physical and personal attributes. If the next election becomes just mudslinging, we all lose. It would be particularly dangerous for the new PM to lead a dirt campaign against Abbott because it could seriously backfire for a woman leader to be seen as being aggressive and mean. However, a dirt campaign on Julia by the Opposition, depicting her as unfeminine, a bad woman or just a puppet, could also backfire on them. Please, could we have policies and not personalities plus gender?

Eva Cox

RALLY FOR EQUAL PAY – TIME TO PAY UP!

There was a parade of Equal Pay champions over the last ten decades. There were passionate and boisterous representatives from twenty one unions. The firefighters, the metalworkers, the mariners and maritime workers, the transport workers as well as teachers and academics were all there in numbers. The Town Hall was bursting with flags and ensigns. The Older Women's Network proudly stretched its banner along the Hall's upper level. No organisational stone was left unturned. It was a rally which epitomized the way in which women's issues have become union issues over the years.

It also demonstrated a high degree of sophistication and orchestration with impeccable timing. It lifted the spirits of all who attended and everyone believed it was time! And, this was only one of seventeen sites for rallies across Australia.

Narelle Clay opened proceedings on behalf of the Australian Services Union. She is CEO of the Southern Youth and Family Service. She introduced Bronwyn Penrith and the Choir of Darlington Public School which welcomed the workers in Indigenous song.

Mark Lennon from Unions, NSW called it a social justice issue. It was one of a range of issues which cried out for fairness and justice and respect for women. A universal paid parental scheme was another. He placed this with increased superannuation and a fairer tax system.

He ended with the rallying cry of: "No more lip service to equal pay. Time to pay up!"

It was the 10th June, 2010. Merle Hight, biscuit factory worker led the parade of champions. She started work in 1937. It was still not much different at that time from the 1912 Harvester Judgment when women were earning 54% of the male rate of pay. She was followed by others, some of whom had worked all their lives to improve the pay and conditions of women workers. Audrey McDonald, Meredith Burgmann, Jennie George, Fran Hayes and Cathy Bloch were all there. Their lives and struggles were laid bare to an appreciative audience of workers from many sectors.

Sally McManus, Secretary of the Australian Services Union concluded with a call for support for the equal remuneration case currently before the Fair Work Australia. The 18% pay differential between men and women needed to be rectified. The case which has been lodged is based on the successful Queensland case fought on a range of equal remuneration principles.

The Union is arguing that women who work in social and community sector jobs deserve to be paid the same amount as

It was a rally which epitomized the way in which women's issues have become union issues over the years.

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men who have similar qualifications. If the case is successful, hundreds of thousands of women could earn an extra \$100 a week. Federal and state governments who largely pay these workers will need to make provision for extra funding across all organisations which employ these women.

The ASU is hoping for a favourable decision from Fair Work Australia by December, 2010 so that implementation can commence by July, 2011. The ASU is aiming to achieve an outcome which is as close as possible to the Queensland classifications.

The rally received some publicity during the day's news, but by the evening bulletins, there was little coverage. The throng marched on the offices of Employers, NSW which, among other employer bodies will be opposing the case. It was a loud howl of protest, but the crowd remained cheerful and optimistic dispersing without incident and with the assistance of a contingent of female mounted police.

Jozefa Sobski

Federal and state governments who largely pay these workers will need to make provision for extra funding across all organisations which employ these women.

Public Sector Workers – A Snapshot for 2009

The number of people working in the public sector as of June, 2009 was 383,014. Of these, 60.9% are women. In NSW as a whole, women make up 46.4% of employed persons. The **social security and welfare sector** had the highest female participation rate at 77%. The **fuel and energy sector** had the highest male participation rate at 82%.

The median remuneration for males (non-casual) in the public sector at June, 2009 was \$66,825 and for females, it was \$64,203.

The NSW public sector represented 11.3% of employed people in NSW.

At June, 2009, 25.9% of employees (non-casual) in the NSW public sector were employed part-time. 86% of all part-time employees were women.

Only 2.3% of employees identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

Source: **Red Tape**, Journal of the NSW PSA. April/May, 2010.

CONVENOR'S REPORT

The Penrith by-election has delivered an outcome that was predictable in its savaging of the ALP vote by a record swing. The State Government's budget outcome with its return to a surplus and the zero stamp duty for those buying homes off-the-plan, was not enough to turn sour voters into sweet supporters.

The shameful waste of resources as a result of leadership and ministerial changes; the propensity for the ALP to demonstrate such readiness to destroy its own; the disruption in the work of dedicated public servants; the uncertainties created by the carousel of portfolio changes has all contributed to a strong view by the majority of people in NSW that the State Labor Government is blighted by self-delusion; riddled with incompetence, saddled with inexperience and a desire to stay in power.

The Premier is a woman of capacity, but without the breadth and depth of experience, or the necessary time to turn the opinion of voters and to remedy the results of so much instability in a circus of under-performing or early retiring Ministers. Those with integrity and a commitment to reform or unwillingness to abandon sound policy, for the politics of survival at any cost, have walked away.

The damage done by the resignation of a dishonest Parliamentar-

ian was probably no more than that done by the resignation of Graham West. All have contributed to a state of total disillusionment with the NSW Government.

A search through State Budget papers yielded little in new money and only \$2.9 million in domestic violence funding. This may have been a victory because some have suggested that even this paltry amount was for the chopping board.

WEL NSW is commencing planning for the State Election. How much may we hope for with an Opposition that has few policies and many unknown Shadow Ministers with even less experience than some on the Government benches. What is the Opposition's Women's Program? We will be endeavouring to gain some insight into its thinking in future months.

If you are an alert and connected WEL member, you may be noticing some changes in our communications. We are now twittering and using Facebook. Importantly, we have turned our attention to upgrading our websites and our capacity to update material so that when you go online, you can confidently expect material that is relevant that day!

We had our Elections Planning

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How much may we hope for with an Opposition that has few policies and many unknown Shadow Ministers with even less experience than some on the Government benches.

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Day (see report on Page 7) and we have endorsed for recommendation to WEL Australia an overall approach with numerous elements. We will not be embarking on the production of a huge policy document covering all major issues. Instead, we are developing a Feminist Policy Framework which will be employed as a tool to test policies against a general principle of fairness with a set of questions to test the adequacy or otherwise of the policy or promise.

We attended the Equal Pay Rally at Sydney Town Hall (see story on page 3). We will be represented at the coming conference jointly organized by WAVE and the Association of Women Educators to be held at Women's College from 7th to 9th July.

Your executive has made a range of decisions as a result of an organisational review. We are attempting a reform in our approach in order to attract new activists to our lobbying work. Reaching younger women requires us to change the way we communicate. We will be reducing the number of newsletters to one every two months and replacing

these with E-updates weekly.

The effectiveness of this new approach to some extent depends on members alerting us to news and events and activities and actions so that these can be posted on our various modes of media communication.

We are asking all members to get on board with us. Start twittering!!! GetUp as a lobby has been very effective in reaching and mobilizing thousands to various causes. There is no reason why we cannot replicate their approach to achieve the same reach to a broad constituency of women.

Send Kathleen Swinbourne, WEL Coordinator, your thoughts and ideas. She is reached on ametista@optusnet.com.au.

Jozefa Sobski
Convenor

We are asking all members to get on board with us. Start twittering!!!

PLANNING TO MAKE WOMEN'S VOTES COUNT

WEL NSW held an Elections Planning Day at Surry Hills on 19th June to agree on our broad strategic approach for the coming federal election. Our Coordinator, Kathleen Swinbourne, had drafted some proposals for the meeting's consideration. These were endorsed for recommendation to WEL Australia. Our aim is to increase WEL's visibility through use of new media and social networking sites as well as the more traditional media appearances.

Over the next few months, we hope to increase the traffic as well as the quality of information postings on our various sites. The key elements of our strategy consist in the development of Factsheets on priority issues, the targeting of marginal or key seats, the compiling of a Lobby Kit, the development of a Feminist Policy Framework as a tool for analyzing policies and promises during the election as well as a guide for policy development. ***Fairness is our underpinning value.***

During the campaign, we will be analysing all party policies using the Framework; providing regular updates to members and others who have joined our networks; securing media appearances; issuing media releases; making appearances at election events and functions; creating a special election page on our websites with daily updates. All policy announcements will be analysed so that we are ready with commentary when it is required. A series of meetings is being proposed with politicians and/or staffers. These will be progressive so that we have established relationships and our views are valued. Obviously, our targets are all major parties.

We have identified some policy areas on which we will be working more intensively. These include pay equity, workplace culture, work and family and related issues, superannuation, retirement income and the taxation system, child care from the users' perspective, domestic violence, housing and homelessness. We will also be doing some work on gender analysis and gender performance indicators.

We will be joining with other women's organisations to endorse their policies where our expertise is limited. The new Women's Alliance – Equality Rights Australia (ERA) has already developed a set of **Election Platform Recommendations: Journey to Equality**. These have been endorsed by WEL Australia and have already been used by ERA with politicians.

As a member, your contribution to the success of the strategy is critical. Without your feedback, we cannot know whether we are reaching the right targets or comprehensively dealing with the issues that matter to women. Your involvement on whatever level is valuable to us. Your feedback is essential.

Jozefa Sobski, Convenor

'Fairness is our underpinning value.'

THE BLOKES WHO SHOULD STEP ASIDE FOR FEMALE DIRECTORS

Stephen Mayne writes in Crikey.com.au, 21 May 2010

FEMALE PRESENCE

With the markets tanking again and pressure mounting for Australia to fix its woeful record when it comes to female representation on public company boards, there is no time like the present to purge some of the long serving or poorly performing blokes in the directors' club.

It remains a complete disgrace that only 8.3% of ASX100 directors are female, when studies show that board diversity tends to produce better results. The solution is for all public companies to aim for at least two female directors, not just the single token woman who can then feel uncomfortably isolated.

I've only been raising the issue of gender diversity at AGMs for six months, coinciding with the unprecedented push we're currently seeing involving various women's networks, along with the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Business Council of Australia.

David Jones and Seek were both given a rocket on the same day at AGMs last November and within weeks had added new female directors.

Whilst we can all talk in generalities about statistics and principles, real change also requires some name and shame tactics and direct action.

I flew to Adelaide on Wednesday for the OZ Minerals and Adelaide Brighton AGMs because these two companies have never had a female director. It was great to see the back of 76-year-old Adelaide Brighton chairman Malcolm Kinnaird who retired at the end of the meeting and responded to the board diversity question by noting there was a lot of "social pressure" to appoint females.

Adelaide Brighton is now looking for up to three new directors and let's hope incoming chairman Chris Harris, who has served with this all-blokes board for 15 years, gets with the program.

Here are some suggested resignations that could potentially create vacancies to be filled by many of the talented and under-worked women on this list which tracks the top 75 female directors in Australia.

David Ryan: still yet to be held to account as the long-time audit committee chair of ABC Learning, he should immediately resign as Transurban chair and a Lend Lease director.

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It remains a complete disgrace that only 8.3% of ASX100 directors are female, when studies show that board diversity tends to produce better results.

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Brian Jamieson: having just taken the chair at Sigma Pharmaceutical he is now over-committed. Given the fiasco of OZ Minerals, an all-blokes board, that would be the appropriate position to quit.

John Stocker: being Donald McGauchie's surviving chief backer at Telstra and the now departed chair of Sigma Pharmaceutical he should quit all boards, including the struggling Nufarm.

Peter Ritchie and Murray Wells: have served for far too long on the Seven board and didn't exactly cover themselves in glory during the recent \$2 billion Westrac related party deal. Ritchie predicted Seven shares would surpass the record high of \$14.68 in 2008. Today they are at \$6.50, suggesting it paid too much to fix Kerry Stokes' \$1 billion private debt problem.

Ken Cowley: News Corp director since 1979 who turns 76 this year and should stand aside so the Sun King can appoint a second female to the board, joining the 30 year old opera singer Natalie Bancroft.

Trevor Gerber: dreadful record at Valad Property Group, lead independent director of Macquarie Airports who championed the outrageous \$345 million divorce payment to Macquarie and also chaired one of the dud Babcock vehicles. Should be off all public company boards yet Risk Metrics has apparently supported his re-election at next week's MAP AGM.

Barry Cusack: still hanging around the Toll board despite all the disasters of Oxiana and OZ Minerals. Toll has no female directors, so this 68-year old should shuffle off promptly to create a vacancy.

Donald Morley: Hugh Morgan's long-time finance director at WMC is approaching 70 and has done a poor job as the over-paid chairman of post box company Alumina for the past eight years. Alumina, Toll Holdings, OZ Minerals, Newcrest and Orica are the five Melbourne-based companies in the top 50 without any female representation on the board.

The solution is for all public companies to aim for at least two female directors, not just the single token woman who can then feel uncomfortably isolated.

Stephen Mayne

159 WOMEN RECOGNISED IN QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY 2010 HONOURS LISTBUT

...only one out of five in the top category and about a quarter in the next category. More appeared in the lower level ones but even so, the total percentage of women was a mere 34%. Is it that women do not deserve at least the same levels of recognition as men for the contributions we make, or is it that what we do is still undervalued by us and others? The SMH reported that 70% of women nominees were successful as against a lower proportion of men, so the overall quality and success rates of applicants are not lacking.

However, the figures illustrate two problems which are related: one is there are always fewer women recipients of the higher levels of recognition that is the Companion (AC) and the Officer (AO). The levels are at the discretion of the selection committee and I have said for years that their judgement tends to mirror the wider prejudice and assumptions about what is important and what is not. So the 'softer' contributions, not business or other male valued roles, tend to be classified at the lower levels of member etc. Incidentally, I scored an AO some 15 years ago, maybe because I raised this type of issue then!

Secondly, the above bias tends to affect the overall evaluation of merit and contribution so fewer women see the higher value of what they do and fewer are nominated. How much of that is because the nominee does not see the merit, versus that others do not see the need to nominate them is unclear. To give successive governments their due they have run campaigns to increase female nominations but they still lag well behind. Given the success rates are higher for women I suspect that female nominations are about a quarter of male ones.

I wonder how many women are nominated by other women, vis-a-vis how many men nominate women? How many women nominate men? Maybe not all that many but I bet they do most of the grunt work in nominations. Maybe more men have female assistants that can help put the documentation together. Maybe we can encourage more women to put in the time necessary to nominate other women, but that will not work on its own.

I think the whole problem comes back to the same one that affects so much of what we do, starting with unequal pay rates and other forms of gendered prejudice. Being active in community, care and other feminised areas such as children and relationships is not valued as highly as money and finance. Until we change what is valued, the feminised skills, commitments and very important social maintenance will continue to be undervalued by not only men but too many other women.

Minister Plibersek can say "I encourage everyone to consider nominating a woman they know and admire, and who has made outstanding contributions to the wellbeing of others, for public recognition in the future." We will be watching for election policies too that tackle the wider undervaluing of women's contributions as underlying causes of the gap.

Eva Cox

www.crikey.com.au—15 June 2010



connected

CALL FOR ENTRIES 17th **WOW** FILM FESTIVAL

...seeing the World through the Eyes of Women...

The **17th WOW (World of Women) Film Festival** is now calling for entries for Fiction, Documentary, Animation, Digi-Vodules and Student films of less than 55 minutes duration with key creative input by women from Australia and around the world. Presented by WIFT NSW, Australia.

WOW is a unique showcase of films by women, allowing for a different storytelling and giving another perspective ... of the world through women's eyes. **WOW 2011** aims to be a festival of discovery, celebration, debate, networking and an inspiration for new work.

WOW promotes and awards the talents of women directors, producers, writers, editors, cinematographers, composers, sound designers. New awards in 2011 for best director, best editor, best sound design, best music composition for eligible films as well as best writer & best cinematographer. These awards are for women in the Australian film industry. Prizes and awards in each category.

WOW SHORT FILM COMPETITION:

Entries are welcomed from any genre, with a variety of production values, from emerging and established filmmakers representing different backgrounds and nationalities. **WOW** welcomes works from every sector of the Australian & International women filmmaking community, particularly from Australian indigenous filmmakers and other under represented groups.

Film must **either** have a woman director, or, if it is directed by a man, must have a woman in at least **TWO** of these categories: Producer or writer or editor or cinematographer.

For more information & to download Guidelines & Entry Forms go to website:
www.wift.org/wow or enter via Withoutabox

ENQUIRIES contact Sil-Nyin : wowfilmfestival@wiftnsw.org.au or text / phone 0402246 601
presented by Women in Film and Television (WIFT) NSW, Australia

**WEL Members/
Executive
Meeting**

Monday

5 July

**66 Albion St
Surry Hills**

ALL WELCOME

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

A special welcome to new members, and many thanks to all members who renewed their membership in the past month, and especially to those who gave so generously to WEL.

Consider a Bequest to WEL NSW

A bequest enables you to perpetuate your ideas and make a difference far into the future. Please remember WEL in your will.

The following wording is recommended:

I bequeath the sum of (amount written in words and figures) free of all debts, duties and taxes, to the Women's Electoral Lobby (NSW) Inc (ABN 50 242 525 012) for its general purposes, and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being of the Women's Electoral Lobby (NSW) Inc shall be complete discharge to my executors for this gift, and that my executor shall not be bound to see to the application of it.

If '**RENEWAL**' is stamped in your newsletter and/or a renewal form is enclosed or attached to your email copy, your membership renewal is now due. Please renew your membership of WEL NSW

Don't forget to let WEL know if you change address.

WEL NSW Executive

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To join WEL NSW

Download a membership form from
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4374) for a membership package

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